9/13/70

Dear Howard,

When, without monotony (whether or not with joy)one does the same thing daily, the days have a way of slipping by uncounted and unnoted. It is, or seems, so short a time since you were here, just out of high school, and now the glories of college are upon you. Each day, soon, when the gears have all meshed and been greased, will tend to slip speedily past you, too. I hope you will be able to slow them so that each new experience, each fresh observation, each tiny stretching of the mind, will be the delight, the exhiliration it can be. Do not be so pre-occupied with your own study of the assassination as I think you may tend to be. I am not suggesting that you abandon it, nor am I suggesting any reduction in your interest. I am, however, strongly encouraging you not to let it dominate your college life. These are precious years for you, and you must not only let them be, you must enjoy them with a hearty lust. By now you know that there is no magic wand we can wave to bringforth both truth and understanding of it, and you also know the story of the assassination is woven into a much broader fabric. One must see the entire fabric, the whole pattern, as well as the individual threads. These are, in a sense, those in which you can really learn the art of the weaver as well as the science of weaving, the years in which you can best come to understand the pattern and from this learning make your own contributions to the design and the method that much better. Do not subordinate opportunity to preoccupation, for among those things that will therefrom suffer is the cherished preoccupation.

The consequences of the assassination are, today, much more significant than the fact of it. Failure to understand this is the most serious inhibition those who have sought truth without finding significant facets of it suffer. It is neither lack of intelligence nor lack of application. What they is context, and that denies them understanding. So, in urging you to revel in the pleasures of scholarship and its concommitents as you now can, I am also urging you to become better equipped to do what you so want to do.

In this hasty mixing of metafors, I assure you there is a tide in the affairs of men. It rises and falls, as independently of individuals as were the seas of Canute. So, we must do what we can to have the ship ready for the swell upon which it can be launched. For some, the younger, this means learning more about the building of ships, so to speak. From an impatient lifetime I tell you patience is required and encourage you to prepare rather than to be impatient. There is a hornets nest on the edge of the roof where the porch meets the living room. It was well started before I noticed it. The night I first saw it, because of the respect in which I hold hornets (they earned it!), I gave them three dozes of a special spray, designed expressly for hornets. They defied their nature by swarming out at me, fortunately aiming for the flashlight instead of thehand that held it. On following nights I tried three other sprays, not one of which (and all are supposed to) killed them. So, we treat that nest as Caesar, yielding to it what its uninvited tenants regard as theirs, and this winter I will dispose of it without benefit of chemicals, by simply smashing it when its tenants are dormant. And do you know, although I can react violently to their sting, they trouble me not a bit and I do everything I otherwise would, save, perhaps, planting a few extra blooms immediately under them. But there are already so many blooms, I do not miss these.

Without taking the time to think it through clearly, what I am trying to lead you to understand is that the best way you can serve your interest in the assassination is to make thebest possible use of your college years. This will not require that you abandon you work, either the inquiry or the writing. And both will be the better for it if you can do as I urge.

I have been deeply immersed in the Ray/King aspect of myx work, first going over the editing and then editing the editor, which was not pleasant, because his style is opposite mine and not congenial to a free-swinging manner, which is mine. He is scholarly and precise, where precision is de trop, insisting upon it. I have come to know this man through only a hasty checking on what he did, and I think, although he gave me deep anxieties, that he is a fine man. I look forward to his coming in ten days or so. Typically, it has been delayed. He seems to be coming to my point of view on almost everything that was in dispute, and I had already decided that if he did not, there would be no dispute, for the important thing is getting the book out, not any particular phrasing or paragraph. However, I've also had to be nursemaiding Bud, and it is no easy h thing to diaper a father. He is off on an ego kick, and that in itself is a great danger. Nobody ever lets himself know when he is on such a bent, so the task of coping with it is not simple. Or pleasant. And the hell of it is that, where I thought I could go on to other things, I dare not, for the blind see not. The real problem here is not to blow the best thing we have. It is good, it is solid, it is irrefutable and it presents our first real opportunity to use the kind of intellectual judo with which we can exert a force we ordinarily do not have. You'd be surprised how hard it is to keep him encentrating on that single fulcrum.

I had to finish up a study of material he had been denying me so that I can be in a position to tell him what he didn't understand when the occasion comes, thus I did not respond to your 9/9 when it came. I've now done that and can return the papers. Incredibly, they hold the most sensational clue everyone has missed, and there has been no search. It is something the most casual reading of COUP II would have told anyone to look for, and it is there and unnoted. But, until I am sure the hallucigen is out of his system, I dare not tell him. And how well I know, regardless of how immobile his face will be, how it will pain him to know that in months that he and others have been poring over these papers, they didn't see what they should have at first glance. I made my analysis while making the first reading. I saw what others did not not befeuse I am more intelligent, but because I do not wear their blinders. This is appropriate to how I began this letter. Meanwhile, crapping away precious time and wasting precious funds he does not have to hoard, Bud has yet to give a legal reading to the drafts of the other suits and he has kept a bright and intelligent young law graduate who could do it so busy doing what he should be doing instead of wasting his time that this fellow also can't find the time to do that job, which is more important than any of the tomfoolery in which Bud is engaged, even if it were not tomfoolery.

Lifton, to whom you refer, has just lost two of his most stalwart supporters by a simple accident: they met and got to talking. One will now be an implacable enemy. He has been conning Sylvia and Mary, and Sylvia went to visit Mary. It is that simple. Mary's visit here was delayed by it. She was here for only the holiday weekend. I do not suggest Dave is lying when he says one picture is missing, but I do suggest it would be well to be alert to that picture, for if he thinks he sees anything significant in it, he'll seek to hide it. He also sees what does not exist. Have you any idea who might be doing thebending down in that later slide?

If Hoch sends you a copy of his "study" with Alvarez and you respond, please send me a copy. We face great problems there. I do not give you details so that your own thinking will be quite independent, but I've finished my own analysis and sent it to him so far without response. Enjoy, enjoy,